

## Sunday Morning Message

December 13, 2020

1 Peter 5:8 – *Standing Against Satan By the Grace of God*  
Series - *Experiencing God's Grace in the Midst of Suffering*

Text - 1 Peter 5:8 - 14

Congregational Reading - 1 Peter 5:8 - 11

*"8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. 11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. 13 The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. 14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen."* (1 Peter 5:8-14)

## Introduction

We have been taking our time examining this first epistle of Peter, which was originally written to “strangers” in what was known in Bible days as “Asia,” but is today the area within the borders of Turkey. These Christians were called strangers because they were believers who knew that their home was in Heaven, and that they were only sojourning here on the earth for a short time. They were suffering intense persecution, and often were living “on the run” trying to escape from their civil and religious tormenters. This was the time of Emperor Nero, and under his reign Christians were being slaughtered by the thousands.

Peter’s letter was intended to comfort these afflicted saints of the Lord and encourage them to remain faithful, even while they were going through extraordinary trials and great affliction.

We, too, are going through some difficult times. People are suffering; though our trials seem to pale in comparison to what we know happened to these Christians in the first century. However, the times that we are living in are becoming increasingly difficult for believers in an increasingly godless culture; and, unless a national revival is sent from heaven, things will likely only get worse.

Though this epistle specifically addresses the unique difficulties of these persecuted Christians within the Roman Empire in the first century, the Holy Spirit of God intended

that the timeless principles contained within this portion of Scripture be applicable to believers today as we Experience God's Grace in the Midst of Our Own Suffering.

So far in these series of messages from 1 Peter, we have learned:

- We can trust in God's grace in the midst of our suffering (1 Peter 1:1 – 5).
- Our faith can be strengthened through seasons of suffering (1 Peter 1:6 – 12).
- What we can do when we are going through periods of suffering (1 Peter 1:13 – 25).
- We are a purchased possession by the grace of God (1 Peter 2:1 – 12).
- We can follow in Christ's steps by the grace of God (1 Peter 2:11 – 25).
- Maintaining Good Relationships by the Grace of God (1 Peter 3:1 – 12).
- Having a Proper Perspective on Suffering by the Grace of God (1 Peter 3:13 - 22).
- Having the Mind of Christ through Suffering (1 Peter 4:1 – 6).
- Stewarding the Manifold Grace of God (1 Peter 4:7 – 11).
- Glorifying Christ Through Suffering (1 Peter 4:12 – 19).
- Shepherding God's People Through Seasons of Suffering (1 Peter 5:1 – 7)

The approach to this series of studies through 1 Peter has been to simply let the Scripture speak for itself. We will read the passage thoroughly and repeatedly; breaking down every phrase, and making sure that we understand all of the words.

## Transition

The last statement that we examined in verse eight declares positively that the God who created and is still sovereign over the whole universe cares for you. That undeniable fact was very important to these first-century saints and will be to us today, as we consider these concluding verses of the letter and are reminded of the source of all of our suffering; the great enemy of God's people.

### I. Facing Satan (vs. 8 – 9)

*"8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." (1 Peter 5:8-9)*

**"Be sober"** (Νήψατε from νήφω – *nēphō* – Verb – Aor.; Act.; Imp.; 2<sup>nd</sup>. Per. Plu.) – This statement is in the imperative mood and is plural - addressed to Peter's readers corporately. It is interesting that this phrase is only found six times in the entire New

Testament and three of these times are in 1 Peter. This is the third time that Peter admonished these suffering saints to “be sober” (see also 1:13 and 4:7). It means “*to be calm and collected in spirit; to be temperate, dispassionate, circumspect.*”<sup>1</sup> It carries the idea of calm and undistracted alertness and vigilance. Being sober means that we are very aware of the seriousness of our situation, but we are not stressed out. Why? Because we learned back in verse seven that God cares for us, and He is also watching.

Practical Point – We are experiencing very sobering times today. The pandemic has everybody concerned, and then there is the political shift away from everything that we have known and cherished as a nation. We are rapidly moving toward a godless, government-controlled, socialism where our religious liberties will be severely restricted. Christians are already being seen as by some as a public enemy. These developments are all very concerning; but we must not panic or get stressed out about them. We cannot let our fears overtake us. We must stay calm, and pray, knowing that our God is very aware of what is happening, and He still has a plan for us. He still wants to make use of us in the midst of these crazy days. If He didn't have a use for us here on the earth, He would have taken us home already. We need to soberly face these challenges, and stay focused on the task that God has for us, which is reaching the people of this world with the gospel.

**“be vigilant”** (γρηγορήσατε from γρηγορέω – *grēgoreō* - Verb – Aor.; Act.; Imp.; 2<sup>nd</sup>. Per. Plu.) Vigilance means “*to watch i. e. give strict attention to, be cautious, active.*”<sup>2</sup> All other times that this Greek word is used, it is translated into the word, “watch.”

Paul uses the same words in his letters:

*“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”* (1 Corinthians 16:13)

*“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:6)

**“adversary”** (ἀντίδικος – *antidikos* – Noun – Nom.; Sing.; Masc.) Satan is our enemy. He is our opponent. He is the enemy of God's will. If you are living your life in fulfillment of God's will then Satan will come after you.

However, so many of God's people have completely lost sight of God's will, and Satan could care less about them. Satan will only oppose you if you are working at advancing God's agenda. Most Christians are only concerned about the things of this earth, but

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 425.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 122.

those who understand that we are here in this world for an eternal purpose will be attacked viciously by the devil.

Practical Point – Satan is coming after the churches today who are fighting passionately to keep their doors open. Many churches and church leaders are laying down, giving in. We are striving; working very hard to keep our little flock together and stay connected with all of our people. But it has not been easy. We have lost track of many. Just when things start to get back to somewhat of a normal, Satan attacks again and we get knocked back. Church service attendances are now half of what they once were. Offerings are down considerably. Nobody is going out into the highways and hedges, streets and lanes of the city to give out the gospel as we were commanded. We are giving up; surrendering; laying down our arms. Satan is behind all of this. He has been very busy while we have been hiding out in our bunkers. Most Christians are completely oblivious; totally blinded as to what Satan is doing.

*"10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand **in the evil day**, and having done all, to stand."* (Ephesians 6:10-13)

Notice the phrase "in the evil day" – that's today. We are not standing today, however; we are quitting; surrendering. Shame on us!

Satan is real, and he is very busy right now. He is close to destroying everything that you and I hold dear. We need to be sober and vigilant, and be willing to fight; to stand against him so he doesn't steal away our freedom to worship and serve God.

Satan may be successful in winning some battles, but he will not win the war. Jesus said: *"... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matthew 16:18)

Satan is already defeated, but he doesn't know it, and he is still fighting. And, sad to say, but many Christians are playing on his team; they are fighting for the wrong side.

Practical Point – Churches like ours have been broadsided by this pandemic. Our challenge now is to figure out how we are going to be able to keep "assembling together," and preaching and teaching the Bible to our folks while trying to keep people safe. We also need to find effective ways to better communicate Christ to our community.

We have to fight for these things. Are you still fighting, or have you given up? Do you believe in the local church? Local churches are dying everywhere.

Notice that Satan is as a "roaring lion" (roaring - ὠρυόμενος from ὠρύομαι – *ōryomai* – Verb – Pres.; Mid. Or Pas.; Part.; Nom.; Sing.; Masc.) and his desire is to devour anybody who stands in his way. (devour - καταπίη from καταπίνω – *katapinō* – Verb – 2<sup>nd</sup> Aor.; Act.; Subj.; 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.), which means he wants to completely consume you.

And, he is on the prowl. He is "walking about" (περιπατεῖ from περιπατέω – *peripateō* – Verb – Pres.; Act.; Ind.; 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.) or roaming around, looking for easy prey.

Satan almost took Peter out. He wounded him pretty good, and for a while, he was out of commission. If it wasn't for the grace and mercy of Jesus, he would have fallen out permanently.

*"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:"* (Luke 22:31)

Jesus tells us what to do about the attacks of Satan. We are to resist him (ἀντίστητε from ἀνθίστημι – *anthistēm* – Verb – 2<sup>nd</sup> Aor.; Act.; Imp.; 2<sup>nd</sup> Per. Plu.). That means we are to put up a resistance; to fight against or oppose what he is trying to do.

*"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* (James 4:7)

If you are going to be able to resist, you will have to be strong spiritually. You have to resist "in the faith." You cannot resist in your own strength. You will have to fight Satan in the faith.

*"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."* (1 Corinthians 16:13)

*"6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."* (Colossians 2:6-7)

Notice also that you and I are not alone. Other believers around the world are facing the same enemy. We need to stand together with them, and support them, and even learn from them. They may have figured out a better way to resist. This is not the time to be at war with other believers over things, which matter little in light of eternity.

## **II. Finding Strength (vs. 10 – 11)**

*"10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

*11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."* (1 Peter 5:10-11)

The strength that we need can only come through the grace of God. That word is found 10 times in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. We know what it means, but it is sometimes difficult for us to comprehend. God, in His grace, will give us everything that we need in order to fulfill His will during these difficult days. Christians who are trusting in His grace are having a much better time going through these days that we are living in today because they understand that it is God who brought them to these days, and it will also be God's grace that will bring them through these perilous days.

"after that ye have suffered" (παθόντας from πάσχω – *paschō* – Verb – 2<sup>nd</sup> Aor.; Act.; Part.; Acc.; Plu.; Masc.). This means that we will go through some affliction and suffer for a while, but God will do something for us through the suffering. Notice the four things that He will accomplish in us through our suffering. Note – all four of these verbs are in the optative mood, which indicates a strong desire rather than a concrete promise. It is God's strong desire that the trials that you and I go through will make us better:

1. He will make you perfect (καταρτίσαι from καταρτίζω – *katartizō* - Verb – Aor.; Act.; Opt.; 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.). That means he will complete you and mature you.
2. He will 'stablish you (στηρίξαι from στηρίζω – *stērizō* - Verb – Aor.; Act.; Opt.; 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.). This has the idea of consistency; being solid; not being wishy-washy; not tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14).
3. He will strengthen you (σθενώσαι from σθενώω – *sthenōō* - Verb – Aor.; Act.; Opt.; 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.). This means to toughen you up.
4. He will settle you (θεμελιώσαι from θεμελιόω – *themelioō* - Verb – Aor.; Act.; Opt.; 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.). This literally means to lay the foundation; to settle.

Illustrate – this building is 25 years old and it is still settling. That is why there are nail pops and cracks, etc. It is still moving. A person who is settled has stopped shifting; he won't budge from his position. He can't be moved.

*"58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."  
(1 Corinthians 15:58)*

Swindoll says this regarding the spiritual development that is discussed here in verse 10:

Peter paints the picture of a well-grounded, seasoned warrior who comes through the battle with maturity and stability that couldn't have been developed any other way. But even as we go through the necessary fiery ordeal that God allows to refine, strengthen, and grow us, we can continue to have hope because of four unforgettable truths. Every believer should inscribe these truths in his or her

mind. The suffering is only “for a little while” (5:10a). It is accompanied by God’s grace and calling (5:10b). It has a holy purpose that reverses and spites Satan’s pursuits (5:10c). And through it all, thankfully, God remains in control (5:11).<sup>3</sup>

These trials that we go through are no fun, but God is doing something to us and through us. He is making us better; He is toughening us up; He is strengthening us and solidifying us; and He is also using these trials to glorify Himself (see verse 11)

Phillips said:

“Thus, out of pain and persecution, out of heartache, tears, and woe, comes a doxology. Suffering is the storm cloud that provides the canvas on which God paints the rainbow.”<sup>4</sup>

### III. Final Salutations (vs. 12 – 14)

*“12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. 13 The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. 14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.”* (1 Peter 5:12-14)

The “Silvanus” mentioned here is likely the “Silas” who accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36 – 41). Silas went back with Paul, Barnabas, and others as an official representative of the church at Jerusalem after the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:22). He was also described as a “prophet” (Acts 15:32).

Notice in these closing verses, Peter makes mention again of the “true grace of God” that these suffering first-century believers were standing in. We called this study of 1 Peter *Experiencing the Grace of God in the Midst of Suffering* and even in these final thoughts, Peter is reminding his readers of that theme.

Notice also that Peter addresses his letter from “the church that is at Babylon.” It is thought by McGee and others that the actual city of Babylon on the Euphrates River is literally what Peter was referring to, which is certainly possible.<sup>5</sup> Many others believe that “Babylon” is a veiled reference to the City of Rome, and was written cryptically for the protection of Peter and other believers who were hiding out in the city. The New

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<sup>3</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on James and 1 & 2 Peter*, Swindoll’s New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 250.

<sup>4</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistles of Peter: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 1 Pe 5:10–11.

<sup>5</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed., vol. 5 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 714.

American Commentary states: “The historical Babylon of the Old Testament was a city in ruins, and so Peter could not have been referring to that city.”<sup>6</sup>

Finally, notice the reference to Marcus, a son in the faith to Peter. Marks a picture of the grace of God. He failed in his first ministry duty with Paul and Barnabas, but now we see him assisting Peter. God's grace would not let Mark fall by the wayside. God's grace picked Mark back up and continued to use him after his failure (see also 2 Timothy 4:1). He even was used by God to pen one of the four gospel accounts. Peter was likely the primary source for the details supplied in Mark's gospel.

Notice finally, that the first-century believers were encouraged to “greet one another with a kiss of charity.” Try doing that at a social distance with a mask on. The point is that these believers were supposed to be intimately connected to each other. They were supposed to like family to each other. They needed each other and they needed to tangibly express their love to one another through this kiss of charity (ἀγάπης from ἀγάπη – *agape*), which is what Paul often referred to as a “holy kiss” (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26). Jesus reminded His disciples that they need to love each other, and we need to love each other within this local church as well, especially as we are beginning to see the world coming against us. As things out there in the world wax worse and worse, we are really going to need each other here in the church. What a great way to end this first letter by Peter.

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 250.